Request from Italy on origination of name of Ancona, Illinois

Request for info on the origination of Ancona

We are two Italian local historians living in Ancona (Marche region - Italy) and we are cooperating on a research on the origin and history of other cities in the world having the same "*Ancona*" name.

Having found the existence of another *Ancona* in Illinois, near Streator city, we found in the book "Place Names in Illinois" (2009) by Prof. Edward Callary, that, regarding the Ancona-Illinois village, it was founded on 1854 and "*The name was proposed by miners from Ancona, Italy, who worked the coal mines around Streato*r".

No doubt that this simple info is anyway extremely important to our research, but, being this info not mentioned by any other document or book available on the web we contacted local Library and Mining Museum at Streator, obtaining many other interesting historical data but nothing more about those "Italian miners". In the whole bibliography referenced in Callary there is no reference at all to the Ancona- ILL name origin, but only that it is a village founded on 1854.

Do I have any info about Ancona in my Livingston County Ghost Town Presentation?

The info on the PowerPoint slides below came from one of the 4 Livingston County history books published in 1878, 1888, 1900, and 1909 Volume 2. The map came from the 1893 Livingston County Atlas.

Ancona – Post Office ?-1991

•VILLAGE OF ANCONA.

•The history of Ancona is quite similar to that of Reading. With the change of dates and names, the remarks which apply to the one, might with propriety be repeated.

•Ancona was, however, founded on a different basis.

- •The Great Air Line Railroad, from Fort Wayne to Council Bluffs, had been projected, surveyed and partially graded through this section, and there was not a doubt entertained that it would be completed.
- •Accordingly, in 1854, the town of Ancona was surveyed for Orson Shackleton and Joseph Gumm.
- •Depot grounds were set apart, and a street for a track surveyed.
- •True to expectation, the road was graded through the village, and then Ancona real estate was held at high figures.

Livingston County Historical Society

Ancona – Post Office ?-1991

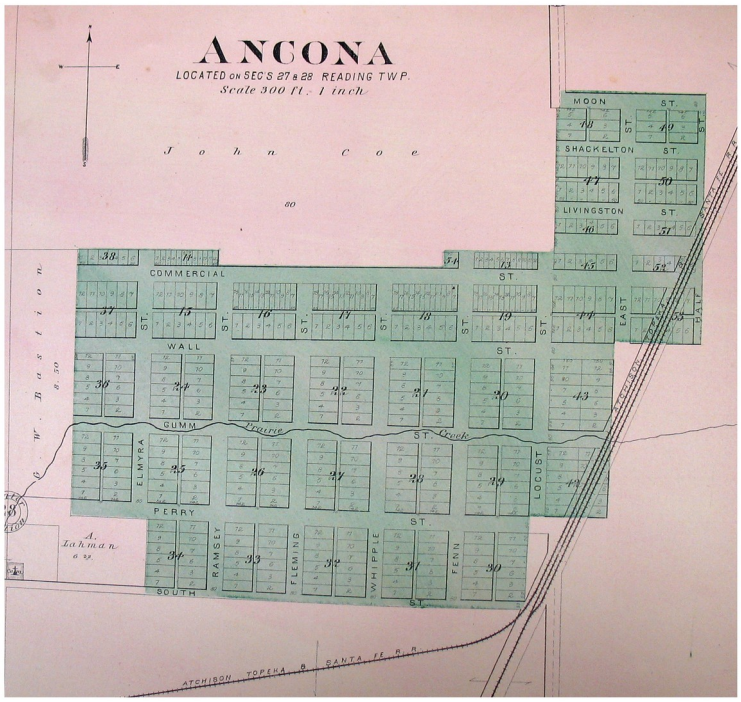
- *Lots* were sold out rapidly, and buildings went up as if by magic.
- Stores were opened and a hotel was built.
    - Orson and Benjamin Shackleton built the first house, a store, and occupied it with a stock of goods.
    - The Shackletons were from New York, and remained here until about eight years ago, when they removed.
    - L. B. Smith, who had been living in the township, and who was formerly from Pennsylvania, built the first dwelling, which was the second house in the place. He is still a resident, and occupies the same old house.
    - William Boatman, also a Pennsylvanian, soon after erected a hotel, and as this was but a short distance from the coal banks it was well patronized.
    - Boatman afterward sold the hotel to Joel Willet, who had been living in the township.
    - Boatman still resides in the village. Willet is dead, but the hotel is still kept open by members of the family.

Ancona – Post Office ?-1991

•After a while, the railroad seemed to be a delusion; and, though it was a severe blow to the little village and the neighborhood, they did not continue to mourn.

•A few years subsequently, however, the mill was removed, and their hope of making this a town of any great consequence went out.

Ancona – Post Office ?-1991



From
1893
Atlas

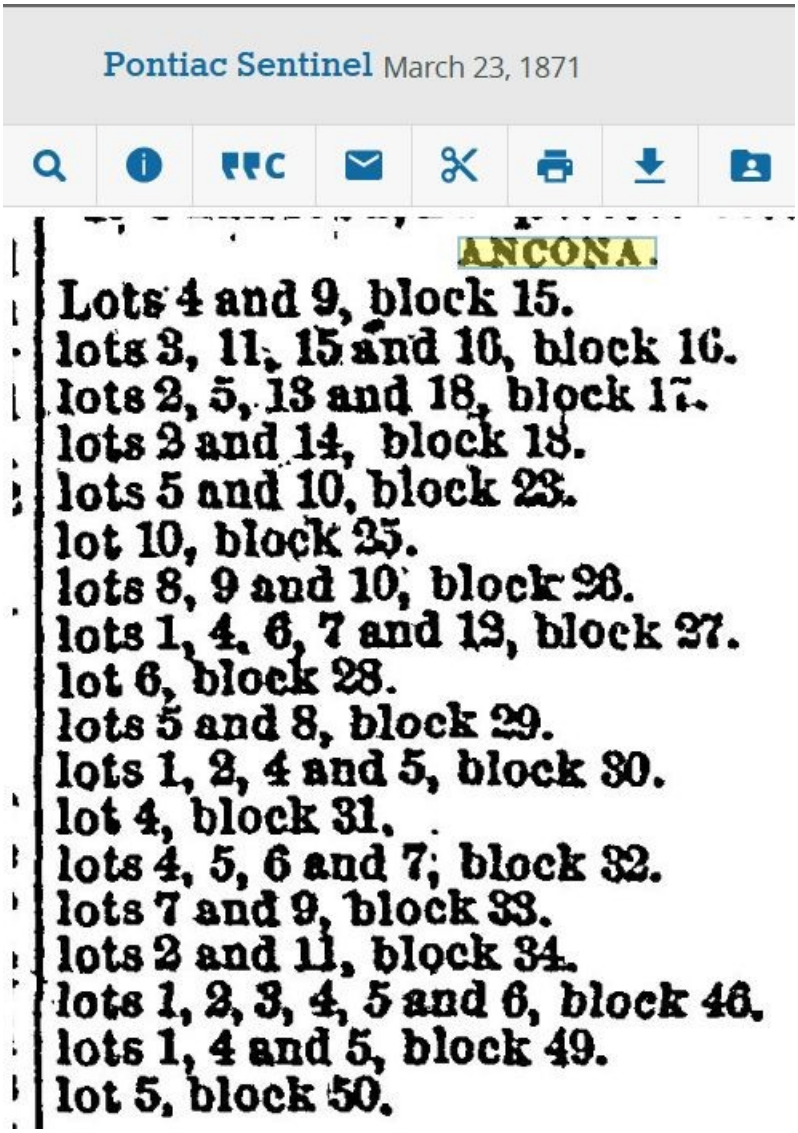
Livingston County Historical Society

Summarizing my 4 slides about the ghost town of Ancona above

No info about why they named it Ancona.

Anything in the Pontiac Daily Leader or Sentinel newspapers?

Oldest mention of Ancona was on March 23, 1871 where lots were sold at public auction because the property taxes had not been paid.


Pontiac Sentinel March 23, 1871
ANCONA.
Lots 4 and 9, block 15.
lots 3, 11, 15 and 16, block 16.
lots 2, 5, 13 and 18, block 17.
lots 3 and 14, block 18.
lots 5 and 10, block 23.
lot 10, block 25.
lots 8, 9 and 10, block 26.
lots 1, 4, 6, 7 and 13, block 27.
lot 6, block 28.
lots 5 and 8, block 29.
lots 1, 2, 4 and 5, block 30.
lot 4, block 31.
lots 4, 5, 6 and 7, block 32.
lots 7 and 9, block 33.
lots 2 and 11, block 34.
lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, block 46.
lots 1, 4 and 5, block 49.
lot 5, block 50.

Comment on 1st mention of Ancona in a Pontiac newspaper was in 1871

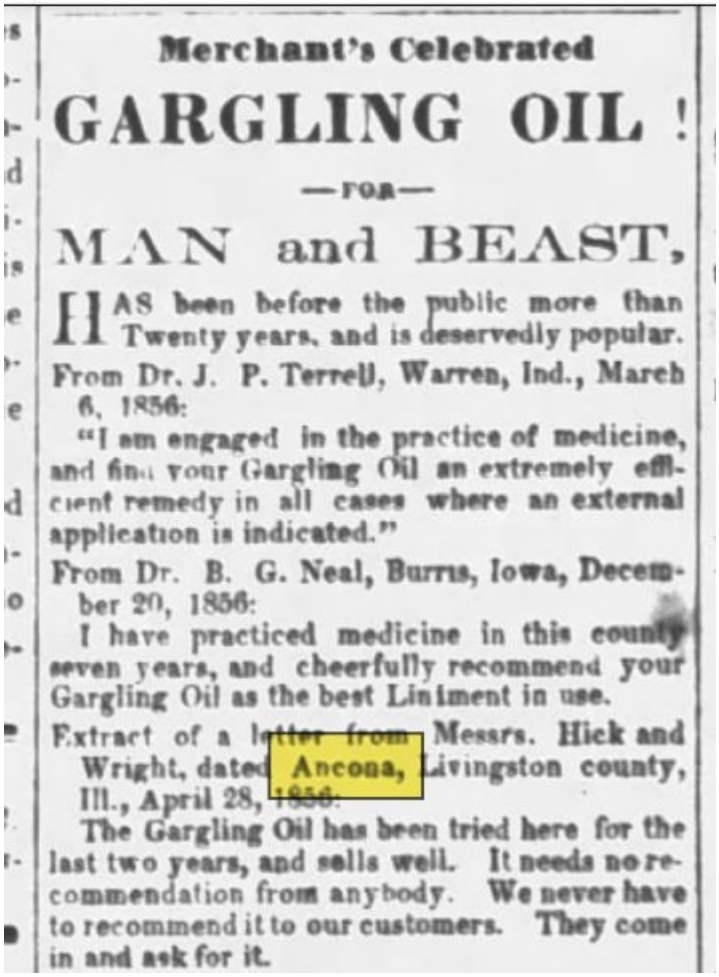
According to the history books noted above, town was surveyed in 1854. This 1st newspaper article was 1871 – 1854 = 17 years later. So, no early newspaper articles explaining why they chose the town name of Ancona.

I skimmed through the early editions of the Sentinel, and found not info about the name of Ancona.

Newspapers.Com

Found an article from 1856 where 2 men from Ancona in Livingston County liked a patent medicine, so people were living in Ancona in 1856.

Randolph County Democrat
Thu, May 13, 1858 ·Page 3



Merchant's Celebrated

GARGLING OIL !

—FOR—

MAN and BEAST,

HAS been before the public more than Twenty years, and is deservedly popular.

From Dr. J. P. Terrell, Warren, Ind., March 6, 1856:

"I am engaged in the practice of medicine, and find your Gargling Oil an extremely efficient remedy in all cases where an external application is indicated."

From Dr. B. G. Neal, Burris, Iowa, December 20, 1856:

I have practiced medicine in this county seven years, and cheerfully recommend your Gargling Oil as the best Liniment in use.

Extract of a letter from Messrs. Hick and Wright, dated Ancona, Livingston county, Ill., April 28, 1856.

The Gargling Oil has been tried here for the last two years, and sells well. It needs no recommendation from anybody. We never have to recommend it to our customers. They come in and ask for it.

The Italian city of Ancona appeared constantly in the Illinois newspapers from the 1830s through the 1850s. I believe other town in Illinois were given names because the first settlers saw the names of other cities or famous people in the newspapers all the time.

What does Perplexity.AI say with respect to why they chose Ancona?

The small town of Ancona in Livingston County, Illinois, was named after the Italian city of Ancona, the capital of the Marches region. The choice of this name, made around 1854 when the town was surveyed, follows a pattern seen throughout the United States in the 19th century, where new settlements were often given names borrowed from European cities. This practice reflected the settlers' desire for distinction, connection to world geography, or simple admiration for foreign places. There is no indication in local historical records that the founders had any personal ties to the Italian city; rather, the name was likely chosen for its uniqueness and perhaps for the positive associations of a port city such as Ancona in Italy

One of the sources from Perplexity is Wikipedia, and it references the same book of Place Names as cited in the original email info request.

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Ancona, Illinois
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
Ancona is an unincorporated community in Livingston County, Illinois, United States. Ancona is located along a railroad line south-southwest of Streator. Ancona has a post office with ZIP code 61311.[2] It formerly served the Santa Fe Railway at Ancona Station.
It takes its name from the Italian city of Ancona, capital of the Marches.[3]
References [edit]
1. ^ a b U.S. Geological Survey Geographic Names Information System: Ancona, Illinois
2. ^ ZIP Code Lookup Archived June 15, 2011, at the Wayback Machine
3. ^ Edward Callary, Place Names of Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 2008.

Perplexity AI on Streator Italian Coal miners

did Streator, Illinois, have a lot of Italian coal mining immigrants when the town was formed?

When Streator, Illinois, was founded and its coal mining boom began in the mid-19th century, most of the coal miners and immigrants settling in the area were from the British Isles—namely Scots, Irish, English, and Welsh—along with German and Irish arrivals. Large numbers of Italian immigrants did not settle in Streator during the earliest period of town formation (1860s–1880s). The predominant immigrant groups only shifted in later decades: by the late 19th and early 20th centuries, significant Italian, Slovak, Czech, Austrian, and Hungarian immigration occurred, but Italians became the largest immigrant mining group mostly after the formative years of the town.

So, while Italian coal miners became a notable presence in Streator's later history, the initial formation of the town was shaped more by northern European immigrants. The Italian community grew as coal mining expanded and foreign labor recruitment increased after the 1870s.

Comment on Perplexity answer above on Italian coal miners

Since Ancona was surveyed in 1854 and likely named that year, it is unlikely the name of Ancona was selected because of the presence of Italian coal miners working in the coal mines of Streator, since these Italians arrived in Streator much later, like the 1870s.

Coal Mining in Central Illinois

The first shaft style coal mine was dug by John and his son Henry Marsh in Fairbury, Illinois, in 1862. Coal was found along rivers in Illinois before that, but they were the first to dig a coal shaft 180 feet deep and mine coal.

According to Perplexity AI program, the first coal mine in the Streator area was:

The first coal mine in the Streator, Illinois area opened in 1866. This mine was developed by the Vermillion Coal Company following coal discoveries in the region. The establishment of the coal mine marked the beginning of Streator's transformation into a mining town and set the stage for rapid growth and industrial development soon after.

So if Ancona was surveyed in 1854 and likely given the name of Ancona that year, the name could not have come from Streator coal miners because the first Streator coal mine did not open until 1866.

One more review of old Livingston County History Books

I think I reviewed all 4 old history books when I researched all the ghost towns of Livingston County a few years ago. But, let's check them again.

1878

VILLAGE OF ANCONA.

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Johnson Bradley came here in 1854, from Ohio, and started a wagon shop, and still carries on the trade at or near the old stand. C. R. Kyser, who had been living in the village of Reading, this year sold out his possessions there to Jacob Bussard, and came to Ancona and opened a blacksmith shop. Joseph Gumm had also been in business in Reading, and, seeing a bigger thing here, removed his store to this point. Gumm and Kyser have both gone further west.

The enterprise that did most to actually develop and give solidity to the town was the flour mill erected by Erastus Loomis, who came here from Ohio, in 1857. At this time there was no such convenience in this vicinity, or for miles west, and it naturally drew a large amount of trade from the surrounding country. Wheat was then considered a good crop, and a great deal of flour was made, not only for home use but for the purpose of shipping abroad.

After a while, the railroad seemed to be a delusion; and, though it was a severe blow to the little village and the neighborhood, they did not continue to mourn. A few years subsequently, however, the mill was removed, and their hope of making this a town of any great consequence went out.

Streator was built a few years ago, and has quite overshadowed this place and Reading. The Chicago, Pekin & Southwestern Railroad was constructed

There are approximately 20 biographies of the early settlers, but none of their names sound Italian.

1888

Quite a few biographies of Ancona residents, but none are Italian, and no reference to why the town name of Ancona was selected.

1900

About 5 biographies of residents.

1909 Volume 2

through the town.

VILLAGE OF ANCONA.

Ancona was laid out in 1854. Orson and Benjamin Shackelton conducted the first store, William Boatman was proprietor of the hotel, and C. R. Kyser opened the first blacksmith shop. Erastus Loomis built a flouring mill in 1857, but it was removed several years later. The town at present has about fifty inhabitants. There are two general stores, a blacksmith shop, and two elevators in the village. A Christian church is located here. The Santa Fe road runs through the town.

Could Ancona been named after a famous person or politician just prior to the town being laid out in 1854?

Use Perplexity AI

in all of America in the 1850s, were there any politicians or famous people with the last name of Ancona?

There was one American politician with the last name Ancona who became prominent in the mid to late 19th century: Sydenham Elnathan Ancona, born in 1824 in Pennsylvania. However, he did not achieve notable public office until he was elected as a U.S. Representative from Pennsylvania starting in 1861—after the 1850s. During the decade of the 1850s, he was not yet a famous national figure or officeholder.

No records indicate any other politicians or famous people in America with the last name Ancona in the 1850s. Sydenham E. Ancona is the only person to have held federal office with that surname, and his prominence came in the following decade.

Conclusions

Based upon the research above, the most logical reason that the small village in Livingston County, Illinois, was named Ancona was because the famous port city of Ancona in Italy that was in the local newspapers all the time in 1850s.

Some of the evidence supporting this conclusion is:

1. According to the information in the four Livingston County, Illinois, history books [1878, 1888, 1900, and 1909 Vol 2], none of the founding settlers had Italian sounding last names and none had families that came from Italy within 1 or 2 generations.

2. Searches of American newspaper archives for Illinois and the nation have many references to the Italian port city of Ancona. It is very likely that some of the founding settlers had heard of the port city of Ancona in Italy. Many villages in Illinois were named after famous European cities, American politicians, or American famous people. For example, Livingston County, where Ancona is located, was named after after Edward Livingston. He was a prominent American politician who served as mayor of New York City, represented New York in the United States House of Representatives, and later represented Louisiana in both houses of Congress. He also served as Secretary of State under President Andrew Jackson and as Minister to France.

   Pontiac, Illinois, in Livingston County, was named after Chief Pontiac, a famous Native American Chief.

3. The story that coal miners of Italian descent that worked in the Streator coal mines named the village Ancona after a famous town in Italy, are very likely incorrect. The first shaft style coal mine was dug in Fairbury by John and his son Henry Marsh in 1862. The Streator coal mine did not start until 1866, long after the village of Ancona was named and laid out in 1854.

4. Others have researched early US Census records, and none of the early settlers had Italian surnames.

5. There were no famous people or American politicians with the surname of Ancona in the 1840s and 1850s, prior to the name of Ancona in 1854. The village was not named after a famous American, which makes it very likely it was named after Ancona, Italy.

6. The early coal miners in both Fairbury and Streator usually came from the coal mining countries of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Germany. Italian coal miners did not come to work in the Streator coal mines until much later after Ancona was founded in 1854.

7. It is interesting that only one town in America is named Ancona!

Closing Thoughts

It is unlikely we will ever know exactly why the early settlers in northwestern Livingston County, Illinois, decided to name their new town Ancona.

In the 1850s, there were very newspapers in Central Illinois, and many of the early newspapers did not last long and we do not have any archived copies of their publications.

I will post a question to our local Facebook history groups and see if anyone has any info how Ancona got its name. If I get any substantiated or documented information, I will let the requester know by email.

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